

Notes from the CEO

By John Krist

Farm Bureau directors elected new officers at their Sept. 17 board meeting. The lineup for 2015-2016 is Scott Klitich, president; Danny Pereira, first vice president; William Terry, second vice president; Katie Brokaw, secretary; and Ted Grether, treasurer. The board also thanked outgoing president Fred Van Wingerden for his service.

Regional Board extends conditional waiver

The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board approved a six-month extension of the conditional waiver for irrigated lands when it met on Oct. 8. That means the existing water-quality program managed by Farm Bureau for the Ventura County Agricultural Irrigated Lands Group will remain in effect and unchanged until April 2016.

No comments were submitted supporting or opposing the

extension. We anticipate having the opportunity to review a preliminary draft of the new waiver, which will be in effect until 2020, by the first of the year. Until then, we will be working on the 2015 Water Quality Management Plan, due to the Regional Board in December, and using it to highlight the many positive trends reflected in our monitoring and survey data.

Autumn area-wide ACP treatments get off to a rocky start

On Aug. 30, Ventura County's citrus growers, pest-control advisers (PCAs) and pest-control operators (PCOs) embarked on the most ambitious program of Asian citrus psyllid suppression in commercial groves ever undertaken in California. The program involves coordinated pesticide treatments across more than 15,000 acres of citrus in the Santa Clara, Las Posas and Santa Rosa valleys. Hundreds of growers, PCAs, PCOs, grove managers and packinghouse field staff – aided by our county's two growers liaisons and the local ACP-HLB Task Force – are working together to pull it off.

This is the second cycle of area-wide management (AWM) treatments in Ventura County. The first was carried out from January through March in the east end of the Santa Clara River Valley. It involved eight of the county's 49 psyllid management areas (PMAs) and achieved good compliance, with 87 percent of the total acreage being treated (the rate within individual PMAs ranged from 80 percent to 93 percent).

The current cycle, however, involves 36 PMAs, vastly increasing the program's complexity. It also increases the workload for our PCAs and PCOs, and amplifies the consequences of any disruption in the timetable, which requires that all the citrus in each PMA be treated within a narrow two-week window.

And disruptions are precisely what the program has encountered. The extended periods of extreme heat that have cooked the county over the past two months have idled equipment and crews. At the same time, explosions of other pests – particularly broad mite, flaring under the unusually tropical conditions – have diverted resources to non-ACP treatments to avoid immediate economic harm from damaged fruit.

It remains to be seen whether the crews will be able to get back on track, and finish the fall AWM cycle by the end of November as planned. There is also the chance the applicator crews will encounter further delays, either in the form of extreme heat, Santa Ana winds or early rains associated with the strengthening El Niño condition in the Pacific.

As I have reminded members of Ventura county's citrus community numerous times since we began planning the transition to AWM, our program at this stage is a huge experiment with statewide ramifications.

We can't really draw lessons from areas outside California that are attempting area-wide suppression efforts (Texas and Florida) because their circumstances are so different. We have different weather and topography, for one thing. And Florida in particular did not even try to control ACP until most of the state was also infected with Huanglongbing (HLB) disease, so their program has struggled from the start. Our landscape is also quite different, with none of the giant citrus plantations of Florida and a much more complex pattern of intermingled smaller orchards and urban development than anything seen there or in Texas.

We also have little in common with the few other areas in California that are trying to implement *(continued on page 2)*

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Legislative year ends with successes for Farm Bureau

By Rich Matteis

The governor's deadline for signing and vetoing bills passed at midnight on Oct. 12. With the deadline behind us, it is a good time to review and recap the legislative outcomes of importance to Farm Bureau and agriculture as a whole.

During the course of the final two weeks before his deadline, the governor's actions were consistent with Farm Bureau's wishes in a number of key areas – not the least of which was CFBF-sponsored Assembly Bill 1390 (Luis Alejo, D-Watsonville). The signing of this bill was the culmination of our nearly yearlong effort to make groundwater adjudications more efficient. Also signed was a companion measure pertaining to adjudication, Senate Bill 226 (Fran Pavley, D-Agoura Hills).

With AB 1390, Farm Bureau focused on making the painfully slow adjudication system more efficient than it is now. Time sinks in the current judicial process were identified and AB 1390 was drafted to deal with those in more efficient ways. SB 226 focused primarily on clarifying that the new adjudication law does not conflict with the local groundwater planning and management directed to be done under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. Clearly, the passage of AB 1390 was a big victory for those wanting to obtain certainty of their groundwater rights.

In the arena of employment issues, the governor was particularly cautious when acting upon measures that would negatively impact employers and, in some cases, employees as well. The governor vetoed measures that would prohibit the use of arbitration agreements to resolve employment-related disputes, AB 465 (Roger Hernandez, D-West Covina); expand the number of parties participating in Cal/OSHA variance decisions, AB 578 (Evan Low, D-Campbell); expand the application of the Family Rights Act, SB 406 (Hannah Beth-Jackson, D-Santa Barbara); and require employers to post a bond to appeal an Agricultural Labor Relations Board order making a make-whole, back-pay or other monetary award, AB 561 (Nora Campos, D-San Jose).

Labor-related legislation signed by the governor included AB 1513 (Das Williams, D-Carpinteria), which addresses confusion regarding piece-rate compensation systems,

including those used in agriculture. The measure provides a "safe harbor" for most employers who may not have correctly compensated piece-rate employees for non-productive time. The governor also signed Farm Bureau-supported AB 1506 (Hernandez, D-West Covina), which provides employers an opportunity to cure technical wage-statement violations.

All in all, we at Farm Bureau believe it

was a productive year for us in the state Legislature. We will be back next year, the second year of the session, to work on unfinished business and to take on an entirely new body of work as legislators introduce new measures beginning in a few months.

— Rich Matteis is administrator of the California Farm Bureau Federation. He may be contacted at rmatteis@cfbf.com. A version of this was previously published in CFBF's Ag Alert.

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AWM (mainly portions of Imperial and San Diego counties) because we have far more acreage and a much greater number of growers. Eventually, the San Joaquin Valley will find itself implementing AWM, at which point California will finally have an AWM program exceeding ours in scale. The very slow pace of ACP detections there, however, suggests that day is still well in the future.

For now, we have to figure out what works – and what doesn't – on our own. Trying to craft policies and protocols while also attempting to implement them is a bit like trying to build a race car while speeding down the track at 200 mph, but we have no other choice. Think of it as "adaptive management" on steroids.

There have been some very productive discussions among members of the Ventura County ACP-HLB Task Force and our hard-working PCA/PCO community, identifying data needs, logistical constraints and strategy options so we can continuously refine and improve the program. One of our chief challenges is adjusting for our equipment and spray crew limitations while still achieving effective ACP suppression, even when the weather and other pests refuse to cooperate.

One piece of very good news that has emerged at the midpoint of our fall AWM cycle is that the California Department of Food and Agriculture has been conducting timely treatments in urban yards within 400 meters of commercial citrus in each PMA. That did not happen last winter, and the result was swift re-infestation of commercial groves from ACP populations in neighboring landscape plants. At our request, and to CDFA's credit, the agency changed its policy and is no longer waiting to determine the

level of grower participation before commencing those treatments.

Countering that, however, are scattered reports of growers refusing to participate – some even going so far as to switch packing-houses in order to avoid the policy instituted by responsible houses to suspend picking and packing fruit from an orchard during the PMA treatment window until the treatment has been conducted.

Evading the treatment requirement is irresponsible and fatally short-sighted. We know for a fact that HLB is less than 50 miles from us, and we also know for a fact that ACP from areas to the south – potentially even infected psyllids – is being transported into Ventura County in loads of bulk citrus. Just recently, a psyllid that tested "inconclusive" for HLB – neither positive nor negative – was collected in Piru. It may be a false alarm, and additional testing of psyllids at the same site will be conducted, but when clusters of such ACP have been found in the past, they have indicated locations where trees soon test positive for the disease.

Holdouts in the Ventura County citrus community must stop thinking of the ACP campaign as a battle against a bug, like so many other battles the industry has fought and won in the past. It is not. Ventura County citrus has never before confronted a tree-killing, insect-vectored disease epidemic, and the tools and strategies of conventional pest management will not stop or control it.

Save the date

To help Ventura County's citrus community better understand the nature of the epidemic – and the bitter lessons from Florida's failure to address it proactively – Farm Bureau and the ACP-HLB Task Force will host a workshop on Dec. 2. As speakers, we've invited three experts whose presentations were among the

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UC releases mobile app for strawberry pests, diseases

By Surendra K. Dara

IPMinfo is the first app from the University of California that provides Integrated Pest Management (IPM) information. The current version of the app contains information on invertebrate pests and diseases of strawberries and gives agricultural professionals easy one-touch access to quick summaries of various pests, pictures to help identify symptoms, and links to additional resources.

Extending research information is an important part of UC Cooperative Extension. As communication technology is advancing every day, using modern channels of communication is important for successfully reaching out to growers, pest control Advisers (PCAs), and other key players of the agriculture industry.

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most compelling at last February's International Research Conference on HLB in Florida:

- Mike Irely, director of research and business development for Southern Gardens Citrus (which farms nearly 15,000 acres of oranges in Florida), who will speak about conditions in his state and provide an industry perspective on what it's like to live with HLB for a decade;

- Dr. David Bartels, an entomologist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Mission Laboratory in Texas, who will discuss his analysis of HLB survey data and what it can tell us about possible HLB infection sites throughout Southern California;

- Dr. Neil McRoberts, an epidemiologist and associate professor of plant pathology at UC Davis, whose computer modeling and research into the economic and social factors affecting disease spread can help guide development of an HLB management strategy for California.

The workshop will be from 1 to 4 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 2, at the Museum of Ventura County, 100 E. Main St., Ventura. It's free, but RSVPs are required. Please contact us at info@farmbureauvc.com or (805) 289-0155 if you plan to attend.

— John Krist is chief executive officer of the Farm Bureau of Ventura County. Contact him at john@farmbureauvc.com.

Traditional newsletters (Central Coast Agriculture Highlights), Blogs (Strawberries and Vegetables, and Pest News), Facebook, Twitter (@calstrawberries and @calveg-gies), Tumblr, and online repositories of meeting handouts and presentations are some of the tools that play a critical role in making important information about my strawberry and vegetable extension program readily available to the agricultural industry. The popularity of smartphones has made this information even easier to access.

Smartphone applications are becoming popular in agriculture to provide information and for decision-making. However, because there were no such applications to help California strawberry and vegetable growers, IPMinfo was developed. It is currently available for free download for iPhones on the Apple App Store. The first version was released in December 2014 and an updated version was released in April 2015.

Growers can find information on invertebrate pests such as aphids, cyclamen mite, greenhouse whitefly, lygus bug, spider mite, and western flower thrips. There's also information about such diseases as angular leaf spot, anthracnose, botrytis fruit rot, charcoal rot, common leaf spot, fusarium wilt, leaf blotch and petiole blight, leather rot, mucor fruit rot, phytophthora crown rot, powdery mildew, red stele, rhizopus fruit rot, verticillium wilt, and viral decline. Each pest entry includes information on biology, damage symptoms, and management options with associated photos. Links provided in the management section will take the user to the UC IPM website for more detailed information, especially about various control options.

To download the app for iPhones, go to the App Store and search for IPMinfo.

— Surendra K. Dara is Strawberry and Vegetable Crops Advisor and Affiliated IPM Advisor for the University of California Cooperative Extension in San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. Contact him at skdara@ucanr.edu.

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TICKETS & DISCOUNTS

Farm Bureau members qualify for discounts on admission to many of Southern California's most popular theme parks and other attractions. To take advantage of any of these special offers, drop by the Farm Bureau office at 5156 McGrath St. in Ventura. You can also place an order and pay by phone, and have the tickets mailed to you. For more information, contact Cissy Perez-Haas at (805) 289-0155. Have your membership number handy. We accept Visa and MasterCard.

Aquarium of the Pacific — Adult (12+ yrs): \$19.95 (save \$9); Child (3-11 yrs): \$11.95 (save \$3). Valid thru 12/31/15.

California Adventure and Disneyland 1-Day Park Hopper — Adult (10+ yrs): \$144 (save \$6); Child (3-9 yrs): \$139 (save \$5). Valid thru 12/31/15.

Cinemark & Century Theatres — Platinum ticket, valid all show times at all Cinemark & Century locations: \$8.75 (savings \$2.75). Additional premiums may be applied for specially priced films and/or events priced higher than normal box office. No expiration.

Knott's Berry Farm — Buena Park/Palm Springs. Adult (12+ yrs) \$36.95 (save \$28.05); Junior (3-11 yrs) Senior (62+ yrs) \$32.95 (save \$2.05). Valid thru 12/31/2015.

Legoland — "E" tickets only. Adult (13+ yrs) \$74.95 (save \$10.05); Child (3-12 yrs) \$69.96 (save \$9.05). Includes 2nd day free ticket within 90 days of 1st visit.

Resort Hopper Ticket — "E" Ticket only. Adult (13+ yrs) \$79.95 (save \$29.05); Child (3-12 yrs) \$74.95 (save \$28.05). Includes 2 visits to Legoland, including new Waterpark (seasonal) and 2 visits to Sea Life Aquarium. Valid thru 12/31/2015.

Magic Mountain — \$45.50 (savings \$27.49) General use ticket (3+ yrs.). Valid thru 9/25/16.

Regal Cinemas — Unrestricted tickets \$8.75 (regularly \$9.50 Sun.-Thurs, \$10 Fri.-Sat). Good at Edwards, Regal, Signature and United Artists Theaters. No expiration.

San Diego Safari Park — (Formerly Wild Animal Park) Adult-African Tram Safari: \$40.75 (save \$7.25) (12+ yrs); Child-African Tram Safari: \$33 (save \$5) (3-11 yrs). Africa Tram Safari includes admission, unlimited use of the Journey into Africa Tour, Conservation Carousel and other shows/exhibits. Valid through 12/31/15.

San Diego Sea World – 1 Day Visit. Adult (10 yrs+) \$64 (save \$22); Child (3-9 yrs) \$64 (save \$16). Valid thru 3/15/16.

San Diego Zoo — Adult (12+ yrs): \$40.75 (save \$7.25). Child (3-11 yrs): \$33 (save \$5). Includes admission, unlimited use of Guided Bus Tour, Express Bus, Skyfari Aerial Tram and all shows & exhibits. Valid through 12/31/15.

See's Candy gift certificate — One-pound box \$15.45 (Save \$2.05). No expiration.

"E Tickets" — Disneyland: 1 Day Hopper Adult \$149, Child \$144. Universal Studios, buy 1 day, get "2015" FREE (3+ yrs). Valid thru 12/31/15. Blackout dates apply after first visit.

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